

# Sacred Heart School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY291282
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 June 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Taylor
<b>Setting Address</b>	Sacred Heart School, Mayfield Lane, Durgates, Wadhurst, East Sussex, TN5 6DQ
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Nursery Education

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sacred Heart School is a small, non-selective independent school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years old. The school aims to develop an understanding of the Catholic faith and to instil respect for the religious and moral values of other races and ways of life. Originally opened in 1934 by a religious order, the school was run by nuns until 1974. It was then taken over by lay staff, and now comes under the Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust which is a registered charity.

The children attend the school from the local area and the wider area of East Sussex and the Kent borders. The school, which is in a rural setting, is housed in a range of buildings. The nursery and reception classes operate from two of these buildings. The children share access to a fenced outdoor play area, in addition to use of the school grounds.

The nursery and reception classes are open each weekday during school term-times from 08.45 to 15.15. A total of 27 children in the nursery and reception classes are in receipt of nursery education funding. The school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

A total of 10 staff work with the nursery and reception children, of these three are qualified teachers and all but one of the teaching assistants have appropriate early years qualifications.

### Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

#### Nursery Education

The children are very happy and confident individuals. There is strong evidence to demonstrate how the school encourages the children to care for the younger children. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are very keen to get involved in planned and free choice activities. Positive interactions are promoted as children from the reception class and the nursery mix regularly. The teachers and the supporting staff have a good awareness of children's individual needs and ensure these are promoted throughout the day. Good use is made of the outdoor areas with the nursery children benefiting from some free flow access to the enclosed outdoor play area. A good range of resources are available and children extend their indoor play to the outside. There is scope to develop this area to further children's learning opportunities.

Planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum is clear and is displayed for others to see. Learning intentions are devised from where the children are in their learning and development. These may relate to the stepping stones for the nursery children or the early learning goals for the reception children, with extension beyond these provided as appropriate. Children's individual progress is well supported with their next steps identified and noted. Their ongoing progress is recorded with supporting written observations.

Children learn self control and behave very well. They show consideration for others, listen to adults and respond positively to requests made. They are encouraged to help tidy up and enjoy being the daily helper. The Good Student Badges are noted in newsletters with a clear explanation as to why this was awarded. Children appreciate having some independence. For example, they can access their drinks when they need and take themselves to the toilet. Each child has a named tray where they keep their work and personal belongings such as their sun hats. Very good relationships develop between the children and with the adults. The children have a good sense of belonging and happily share details of their lives with others.

The children communicate well, with the staff using supportive resources such as picture exchange cards for children whose speech and language is not fully developed. Children's language for thinking develops through good staff interactions and open questions. They have ready access to writing materials and utilise these in their play. They listen well at story time and enjoy joining in. Children's reading and writing skills are appropriately supported both in the nursery and in the reception class. Children develop these at their own pace, positively encouraged by the staff.

Action number songs are popular with the children and they like to demonstrate their counting skills; they use mathematical language in their play. Children have an awareness of simple calculation, with some children having no problem with noting what numbers are higher or lower. This understanding is supported by the staff as they ask children to decide how many plates are needed or as the more able child is involved in activities that involve estimations. An activity of making coloured pasta necklaces shows how well the children were aware of patterns and sequencing.

A topic in the nursery about Africa involves the children in a range of interesting activities. They explore objects that relate to the country and make clay models of a chosen item. They

learn about the local community and the wider world, in addition to the school's Catholic philosophy. Children gain a sense of time as they plant seeds and help care for the plants. The school grounds are used to look at the natural environment and noting change.

Role play is very popular and the staff are very good at developing this with children through the introduction of additional resources and suggestions. The children make good use of both the outdoor play area and indoors as they play. Whilst outside, to support the role play of travel they create a plane and airport tower out of chairs and crates. They get chalks to draw wings for the planes and then decide to draw a train track instead. This shows their own confidence in the child initiated play. There is a good variety of materials for children to use during planned craft activities and free painting is always available. The children have fun as they explore sound and rhythm using African drums.

Children's physical development is supported well through the available resources and activities. They manoeuvre the ride on toys safely as they play among other children. They have regular opportunities to challenge their abilities, such as clambering and climbing, as they use the school adventure play area. Children's hand to eye coordination and fine motor skills develop well as they use small equipment and tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and sticky tape dispensers. From the daily routines in the nursery and reception class they become very aware of the need for a healthy body.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Regular newsletters and notice boards ensure parents are informed about the running of the nursery and reception class. They share useful information about their child when they start. This helps children settle and enables the staff to know something about the child's initial level of learning development. The children's progress records are shared with parents, who have the opportunity to contribute. The partnership with parents of nursery education children is good.

The contact books, that are used in both the nursery and reception classes, help with the sharing of information about a child and their life, both at home and at the school. These are also used to note any learning need that can be supported at home. Particularly for the reception class children this relates to reading skills. Parents appreciate the supportive and welcoming environment at the school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The small classes and good adult to child ratios assist the staff in getting to know the children well, enabling them to support or challenge children's continued learning and meet individual needs. The staff work well as a team and there is very good communication between the nursery and reception class. The staff's professional development is well supported and an appraisal system is in place to help identify and encourage further training needs. Development plans are in place and show a commitment to improvement. There is a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. The staff team as a whole are very committed and act as good role models to the children. The children benefit from the organisation that supports their learning through play. Leadership and management are good. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Good progress has been made since the last nursery education inspection. The nursery was asked to consider the organisation of the book area in the nursery class to ensure children have a consistently quieter area in which to access books and stories. The way the books are currently organised is not overly inviting. However, the area is now more defined, children have easy access to a wide selection of books and some cushions for comfort.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the outdoor area to create further learning opportunities for children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)